HARAMBEE FLAME

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THE AFRICAN CONSERVATIVE

In a recent edition of METROPOLITAN, a weekly newspaper published in Omaha, there was a feature article on Lawrence King, a local African businessman and active supporter of the Republican Party. He was quoted as having said a number of things, many of which would be considered a little unusual coming from an African. Among these things was a comment by King that he considered Ed Meese to be an important role model, someone he admires. If, in fact, this quoting of King was accurate, one wonders what kind of value system this man has that would enable him to find anything at all admirable about an Ed Meese.

Whatever wondering one might do notwithstanding, the issue of interest is not King but a development which his political/economic ideas represent--that development being the increasing number of Africans in this country who are espousing positions that might be characterized as a "pragmatism of the affluent." Lawrence King is not some one-in-a-million aberration. Thomas Sowell, Roy Innis, and Walter Williams are but a very few of the figures on the national scene who have become banner-carriers for a right-wing conservative political and economic agenda.

It would seem that, in a situation where at least a third of the U.S. African population lives in poverty, we would not have intelligent African political activists, writers, and/or economists promoting a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps prescription for the serious kinds of economic and social ills we are suffering from. Of course, the question of how "intelligent" some of these African conservatives are is a valid one in that it does seem as if there are those in the conservative ranks who are functioning only as stooges for wealthy political and/or corporate patrons. But the same can be said

about our African liberals, who perpetuate the dependency model in which we pin our survival hopes on our ability to beg government and its agencies.

But what about this pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps posture? Is there something wrong with it? Is there anything unreasonable about African persons suggesting that we stand on our own feet, that we take responsibility for our own destiny? This was, afterall, what Malcolm called upon us to do. The problem with the African conservatives' brand of self-sufficiency is two-fold. First, it assumes that it is possible for us, just through individual determination and initiative, to "make it." And, second, it only views our economic future in a capitalist context. In addition, these African conservatives tend to share a view of the U.S. in which institutional racism is essentially dead or, at least, no longer a serious obstacle to progress on the part of the African population.

How is it that these African conservatives have such an unrealistic view of America? One of the first things we notice about Lawrence King, Thomas Sowell, and their like is that they tend to be very well off financially and to look upon themselves as self-made men. It is possible that, as little as they speak of it publicly, these folks recognize the racist character of this country and subconsciously feel like favored slaves, special people who have been allowed by the master to have some of the things that he has. It is possible that they see themselves as having earned their special treatment through very hard work and extraordinary perseverence. Feeling so favored, they are grateful for their special status and believe they owe it to the U.S. political/economic establishment to cheer-lead on its behalf.

Moreover, the world of the African very-well-to-do is often an insulated world, insulated in the

sense that many of those who live in it create a "reality" for themselves in which the African unemployed, Africans on welfare, Africans who are homeless exist in a place damned near light years removed from their spacious homes, condominia, and so forth. And there is the matter of the fragile foundations of individual African wealth(relative to the earnings and economic worth of Africans in this country in general). Due to the cutthroat nature of the "free enterprise" system - particularly in its monopolistic stage - and the pervasive character of institutional racism, the accumulation of wealth by Africans occurs against very great odds. And many of those Africans who do accumulate wealth must sense, to some degree or other that their homes are veritable houses of cards that could come crashing down on them at any time.

In the process of getting what they have, these well-heeled Africans generally have had to trade in certain African-American cultural traits and a fair number of principles in order to gain acceptance into "the man's world." What they have developed along the way is a philosophy of expedience in which all things take a back seat to the "bottom line." This at least partially explains why it is so easy for African conservatives to be African conservatives and to promote and/or support ideas and developments that may be clearly in opposition to the interests of African people as a whole, in this country or worldwide.

It has not been the intent of this article to condemn certain African folks on the basis of their baving financially prospered. Nor has it been a purpose of the above to suggest that all monied African folks necessarily are opportunists who have stripped themselves of identity with or responsibility to African people at large. Rather, the issues that have been raised here have as their purpose a shedding of light on the motivations, values, etc. of those Africans who stand before us in praise and/or support of things and

people which and who stand so frequently in stark opposition to our interests. We must understand that many of the things which seem bizarre and incredulous to us are not necessarily so bizarre and incredulous when we understand the contexts in which they operate.

MEDIA

The MILWAUKEE COURIER, which had been merely one of the run-of-the-mill organs of the so-called "black press," has received an injection of potency, thanks to Matthew Stelly and LaRue Nedd of Omaha. Over the past three months or so, since Matthew and LaRue became editor and associate editor, the COURIER has moved away from the too-typical road of irrelevant journalism to the path of investigatory and advocate journalism. As we have often stated, it is too frequently the case that organs of the "black press" spend too little time addressing issues of life-and-death significance and too much time covering "high"-society fluff. Thanks to Matthew and LaRue, and to those who had the insight to hire them, the MILWAUKEE COURIER is now taking its journalistic responsibilities to African people seriously.

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P.O. Box 2500
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-See page 16

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of th Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organiza tion, Inc.) is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and dev elopments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African peopl based solely on place of birth. Therefore, refe- rences to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereo from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessaril represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are ac- companied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speak ing, all unsigned articles areeby the editor, Wop ashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are sul ject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. Send your submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cul.
Attn: Editor/Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

Note on poetry submissions: We are looking for poems that make effective use of imagery, that have beauty and power, and thats do not sacrific such for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme

From Other Sources

Beneath The Surface Of The Shreveport Rebellion

"Racial tensions exploded into a riot here Sept. 20 as over 1000 Blacks exprsssed their outrage over the shooting death of David W. McKinney, 20, by throwing bricks and looting and burning stores. McKinney was shot, police said, when two white teenagers who were trying to buy drugs opened fire after the drug dealers ran away with their purse. McKinney was a bystander, and not involved in the drug deal...

"On Aug. 4 Darrin Martin was fatally shot in front of a restaurant by a white man who had been harassing Blacks inside the retaurant...

"These two incidents, however, were merely the sparks that ignited a powder keg waiting to go off. Shreveport has a long history of racism and racial polarization and strife,...

"In the past year a biracial task force was formed to address some of the racial tensions in the city. The white members of the committee sought and obtained a grant to improve race relations. They then proceeded to run rough-shod over the task force, hiring a white woman with no race relations background to administer the program. As a result, all the black members resigned from the task force; the whites on the committee picked their replacements, outraging the Black community..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Shreveport Riots After Youth Is Shot," which appears on page 4 of the Oct. 5 edition of THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

African Senatorial Candidate Does Well In Poll

Seventeen percent of those who responded to a phone poll conducted by Omaha's KETV said they would vote

for New Alliance Party U.S. senatorial candidate Ernie Chambers in November. The poll was conducted after a televised debate between Chambers and Republican incumbent Dave Karnes. The Democratic contender, former Nebraska Governor Bob Kerrey, refused to take part in the debate because of the inclusion of Chambers, the only African-American in Nebraska's state legislature.

"The results of the poll--in which Kerrey was favored by 47% and Karnes by 35%--reflect a tremendous jump in support for Chambers. A survey conducted by the OMAHA WORLD HERALD and the SRI Research Center on the eve of the debate showed Chambers with only 4% of the vote..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Chambers Soars In Poll: Karnes Backs Out Of Debates," which appears on page 10 of the Oct. 6 edition of THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE(N.Y.).

Performance Group Celebrates African Survival

"...The Choreopoets have developed over the years as a community-based, semi-professional organization of Black performance artists. The Choreopoets have gone through a number of personnel changes in 11 years, but there has never been a turn-around in the focal point of the group. And that focus is the celebration of Blackness in these United States; a celebration of the survival of Black people, and a cultural call for justice and peace in the United States and internationally.

"The group is made up of 13 performers - musicians, dancers, actors, and poets...

"In Seattle,...the Choreopoets are performing, working, playing and helping the way to a revolutionary future of unity and struggle..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Choreopoets," which appears on page 10 of UNITY(Oakland)Sep 1

Muslim Efforts Against Drugs

Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan --joined today by more than 200 rssidsnts of the Mayfair Mansions housing complex in Northeast Washington--paid tribute to the drug and crime-fighting success of the Muslim Dopebusters patrols ...

"Less than six months ago, the courtyard was controlled by drug merchants and their customers, who had turned the complex into an open-air drug marketplace. But in one day, the Dopebusters drove virtually all the criminal elements out of the area, after disarming a shotgun-wielding man while a local television station cameraman filmed the episode...

"Promising that he would not reduce the Muslim patrols before the community was ready, Farrakhan did foresee expansion. 'God willing, when this is what we would call successsfully completed', Farrakhan said in an interview following his remarks, 'and the tenants themselves can maintain this, then we can minimize our presence and move to other areas that may need us.'".

-Above passages excerpted from "Farrakhan Salutes Dopebusters," which appears on page 2 of the Oct. 6 edition of THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE.

Congressional Black Caucus Holds Legislative Weekend

"There is always a strong sense of paradox at the Congressional Black Caucus'(CBC) yearly conventions: well-to-do black Americans gather in opulence to bemoan black America's desperate plight...

"A glittering array of nearly 20,000 African-Amer-

icans converged here(in Washington, D.C.) September 14-18 to discuss a political agenda, to help devise solutions for a community in increasing crisis--and to party. Some political organizers condemn these annual conventions as frivolous and ostentatious and refuse to attend...

"'Since this Congress was sworn in, caucus members have introduced an unprecedented 421 individual bills and amendments', she(Amelia Parker, Executive Director of the CBC) said. Also unprecedented are the number of leadershjp positions held by the CBC's 23 members: they include chairmen of five full committees, two select committees and 18 subcommittees. For its size, the caucus represents one of the more influential power blocs in the House.

"Still, black House members represent only 5 percent of the House total, while blacks account for more than 12 percent of the U.S. population. And, their legislative initiatives are often ridiculed for their lockstep adherence to an unfashionable liberal perspective. Though their power is disproportionate the CBC's numbers are too small significantly to affect the direction of legislation. ..."

-Above passages excerpted from."The Congressional Black Caucus' Leaders Look Toward The Future," which appears on page 3 of the Sept. 28-Oct. 4 edition of IN THESE TIMES(Chicago).

Southern Africa Ceasefire Talks

"As the latest round of talks on Angola and Namibia got underway Sept. 26, South Africa threatened to place the current Angolan army offensive against Unita at the top of the agenda. Pretoria argues that the Angolan push against Unita positions along the Benguela railway line constitutes a breach of

the ceasefire that went into effect Sept. 1.

"But that ceasefire was specifically between the Angolan armed forces(Fapla) and their Cuban allies on the one hand, and the regular South African army, the SADF, on the other...

"At no point was Unita involved in the ceasefire, and no Angolan spokesperson ever suggested that operations against Unita would stop.(Unita took the same position, saying it would not be bound by a ceasefire it had not signed.)

"...Unita has been badly mauled, losing the two towns of Munhango and Cangumbe. Munhango was a key transit point for Unita infiltration further north, particularly toward the diamond-mining zones of northeastern Angola...

"The key issue in the negotiations among Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the U.S. remains the time-table for a Cuban troop withdrawal. Here South Africa has softened its position slightly. According to the director general of the South African Roreign Affairs Department, Neil Van Heerden, who is heading Pretoria's delegation in Brazzaville, the beginning of an electoral process in Namibia is no longer dependent on complete withdrawal by Cuba from Angola...

"In Angola, Perez de Cuellar reportedly told SWAPO President Sam Nujoma that the UN would do everything in its power to insure that Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibian independence would be put into operation starting Nov. 1, and that the UN transitional force(UNTAG) will be ready by that date...

"The secretary general also stressed that the Cuban presence in Angola was a bilateral matter between Luanda and Havana in which the UN had no right to intervene..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Pretoria Pulls Anti-Unita Drive Into Talks," which appears on page 13 of the Oct. 5 edition of THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

Peace Plan For Western Sahara

"A peace plan is on the table, but guns are still blazing in the Western Sahara war. As the UN Security Council last week unanimously endorsed a framework for peace in the North African territory, Polisario Front guerrillas and Moroccan troops clashed in their bloodiest confrontation in nearly a year.

"The UN proposal for a referendum on independence for the Morroccan-occupied, former Spanish colony has been cited as part of a purported worldwide outbreak of peace. But according to Polisario, a decisive breakthrough for ending the 12-year-long conflict is not yet in sight...

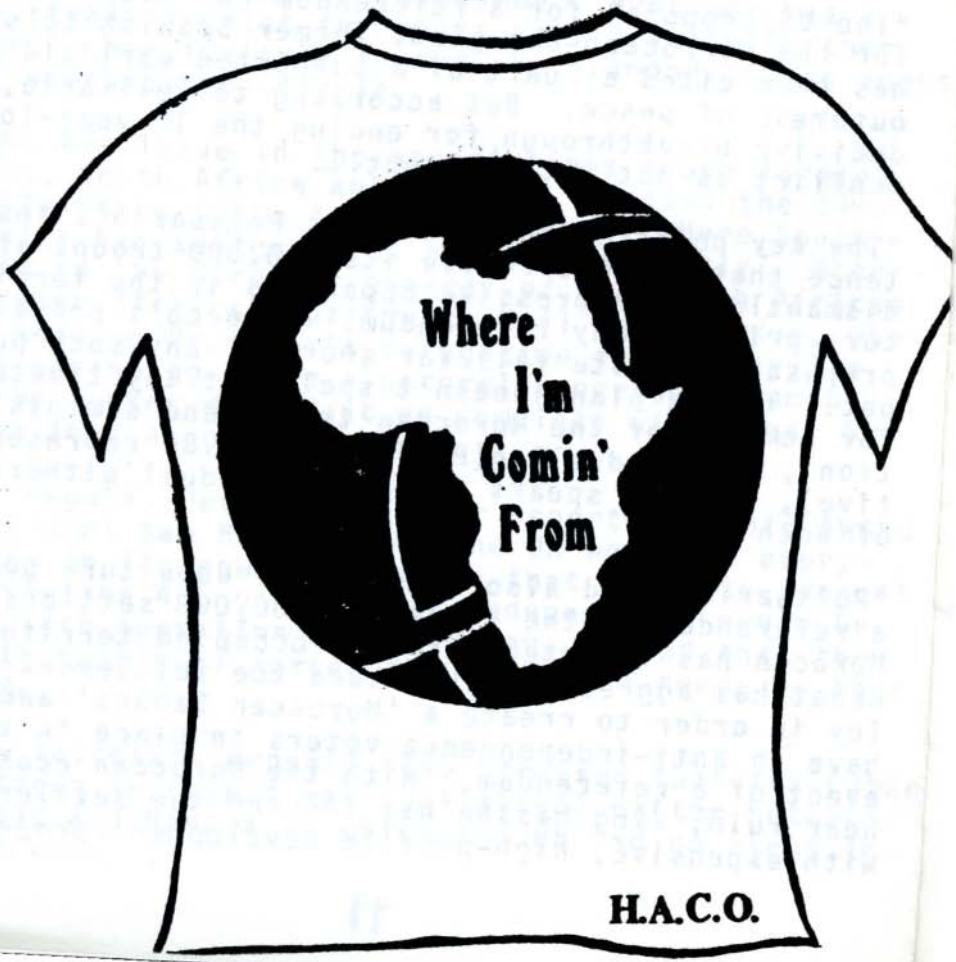
"The key point of contention is Polisario's insistence that Morocco remove its 180,000 troops and dismantle its repressive apparatus in the territory prior to any referendum. Morocco's private proposals to date fall far short of any such pullout. The UN plan 'doesn't spell out any timetable for removal of the Moroccan troops and administration', says Abduallah(Polisario's U.S. representative), 'but it speaks about thegradual withdrawal of both'...

"Polisario would also like to see departure before a referendum of the estimated 100,000 settlers Morocco has imported into the occupied territory. Rabat has aggressively pursued the settlement policy in order to create a 'Moroccan Sahara' and to have an anti-independence voters in place in the event of a referendum. With the Moroccan economy near ruin, King Hassan has induced the settlers with expensive, high-profile development projects

in Western Sahara...

"According to Polisario, the UN has now provided a formula acceptable to both sides for counting legitimate voters...In addition, notes Abduallah, 'Saharan tribal chiefs, who have a better idea of who is Saharan and who is not', will monitor the count, as will representatives of the two warring sides..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Polisario: Still Fighting For Independence," which appears on page 12 of the Sept. 28 edition of THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).



Announcements

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW is a quarterly magazine which "provides classic and sparkling new essays, fiction, poetry and visuals that explore the African-American experience." It has an "open submissions policy for graphics, photography, illustrations, short fiction, essays, reviews and poetry. Written work must be typed and all submissions must have a stamped envelope for response and return of material." Send submissions and/or inquiries to:

SHOOTING STAR REVIEW
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"The Africans" is available from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities' Humanities Resource Center. "The Africans" is a nine-part series of programs aimed "to offer a new perspective on Africa, to explore the history of the continent and so look at modern Africa with new insight." It "examines the history of Africa through its triple heritage: what is indigenous, what was contributed by Islam, and what was aquired from the West." The series comes in nine 60-minute VHS videotapes. For more information, write to:

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Back In Time

Near the end of the nineteenth century, the British, in their attempt to take over the hinterlands of the Gold Coast(present-day Ghana), exiled King Prempeh in 1896. In 1900, still not having succeeded in gaining control of this part of Ghana, the British sent a governor to Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti, to demand the Golden Stool, the Ark of the Covenant of the Ashanti people.

The Golden Stool was the supreme symbol of the sovereignity and independence of the Ashantis--a fierce and warlike people who inhabit the dense rain forests of what is now the central portion of Ghana.

On March 28, 1900, the Governor, Lord Hodgson, called a meeting of all the kings in and around the city of Kumasi. He informed the people that their exiled King Prempeh would not be permitted to return. He reminded them that the indemnity that the British had demanded before the exile of King Prempeh had not been paid. Further, he demanded that the Ashanti surrender the Golden Stool...

The Ashanti heard the governor's speech and showed no reaction except silence. The meeting broke up quietly and the men went home to prepare for war. The inspiring force behind the Ashanti people at the time was Yaa Asantewa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu. The war that followed bears her name...

In the evening the chiefs held a secret meeting at Kumasi. Yaa Asantewa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu, was at the meeting. The chiefs were discussing how

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they should make war on the white men and force them to bring back the Asantehene. Yaa Asantewa saw that some of the chiefs were afraid. Some said that there should be no war. They should rather go to beg the Governor to bring back the Asanthene King Prempeh.

Then suddenly Yaa Asantewa stood up and spoke...: "Now I have seen that some of you fear to go forward to fight for our King. If it were in the brave days of old, the days of Osei Tutu, Okomfo Anokye, and Opolu Ware, chiefs would not sit down to see their King taken away without firing a shot. No white man could have dared to speak to chiefs of the Ashanti in the way the Governor spoke to you chiefs this morning. Is it true that the bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. Yea, it cannot be! I must say this: if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will. I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields."

This speech stirred up the chiefs, and at once the meeting swore the great oath of Ashanti to fight the white men until they released the Asantehene. Yaa Asantewa was the leader in this war. Then the Ashantis cut telegraph wires and surrounded Kumasi. The Governor and his party kept themselves in the fort, where they suffered from disease and hunger. For many months, the Ashantis led by Yaa Asantewa fought very bravely and kept the white men in the fort...

Source: BLACK WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY
Edited by Ivan Van Sertima

UJAMAA

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KWANZAA
(Dec. 26-Jan 1)

Umoja - Unity

Kujichagulia - Self-determination

Ujima - Collective Work & Responsibility

Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics

Nia - Purpose

Kuumba - Creativity

Imani - Faith

May this season of Kwanzaa move us to rededicate ourselves to those traditional African values by which our ancestors achieved greatness.